

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,

I seek to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, and I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent -- less than 1/2 of 1% of all local programming. A majority of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story! Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Broadcasters have clearly failed in their legal obligation to serve the public interest, so the FCC should better define meaningful public interest requirements including local civic and electoral affairs programming. Broadcasters should at least air 3 hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

Andrew Butz
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